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AUTHOR Minaya-Rowe, Liliana
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ABSTRACT

A three-year training program for bilingual/bicultural program staff development specialists is described. The program, which involves the cooperation of a higher education and six local education agencies (LEAs), seeks to train staff development specialists who can function in two languages, sensitive to the problems and advantages of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, have strong background in bilingual and bicultural education, and are committed to quality education and social change. In particular, efforts to institutionalize the program are examined, based on eight indicators of institutionalization: active support of administrators; positive attitudes of non-bilingual education faculty; faculty support through institutional funds; bilingual faculty tenure and promotion; program continuation without federal funds; involvement of several professionals in program operations; compatibility with institutional priorities; and sufficiently high enrollment levels to sustain the program. Theoretical constructs used in the training, curriculum design and content, practicum, participant perceptions of the program, and benefits to the organizational participants are reviewed. Contains 35 references. (MSE)

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Staff Development Specialists for Bilingual and Bicultural Education Programs: A training Program

Liliana Minaya-Rowe

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT SPECIALISTS FOR BILINGUAL AND BICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS: A TRAINING PROGRAM

Liliana Minaya-Rowe

Abstract

This paper discusses a three-year training program for staff development specialists to work in bilingual and bicultural education programs within a context of staff development partnerships between and institution of higher education (IHE) and six local education agencies (LEAs). It discusses the official status of the IHE's bilingual training program based on eight indicators of institutionalization. It presents the curricula to increase the trainees' qualifications in terms of theoretical and practical needs. It analyses the staff development process-oriented approach used in the program via a seminar and a practicum at LEAs to make the trainees more responsible for change and for creative problem solving. It illustrates the trainees' interpretations of theoretical constructs in the areas of language acquisition and bilingual cognitive development in the context of linguistic and academic instruction and how they presented them in an understandable way to a partially-trained audience. Evaluative descriptions by the participants of the staff development delivery and by the trainees of the seminar and the practicum are presented.

Introduction

IHEs have as a mission the provision of services to the increasing language minority populations in the country. According to the 1990 Census, the number of school-age children, ages 5 to 17, who are limited English proficient (LEP) increased significantly during the last decade by 38 percent, accounting for approximately 6.3 million children. Currently, LEP students account for over 14 percent of the elementary and secondary population. Furthermore, 9 percent of these children speak Spanish at home, representing over 4 million children (National Center for Education Statistics, 1993).

However, as the student population becomes more linguistically and culturally heterogeneous, the teaching force is expected to become increasingly homogeneous. At present, ethnic minorities account for 10 percent of the teaching force, and their representation is supposed to drop to 5 percent by the year 2000 (Boe, 1990; Macías, 1990). These trends point to language minority schooling as one of the most critical issues in teacher education today. The demographic imperative calls for immediate action on at least three fronts. First, everyone entering the teaching profession--regardless of area of expertise or level of training--must be prepared to teach linguistically and culturally heterogeneous classes. Second, teacher training IHE must find ways of increasing the pool of language minority teachers and teacher trainers who can serve as role models and linguistic brokers for the growing numbers of language minority students in the elementary and secondary schools. Third, teacher trainers have a role to play as staff de-

velopment specialists for bilingual and mainstream teaching staff in in-service training at the LEA level (García, 1993).

In addition to the demographic challenge, there has been for over the last two decades a considerable amount of research--pedagogical, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic--that has evolved in terms of second language acquisition, first language development, bilingualism and biculturalism. That research has helped refine, substantiate, and re-state the goals of bilingual and bicultural education. It has also supported the position on the positive effects of bilingual education and the use of the first language to achieve true bilingualism. It has led to proposals to the society at large, the monolingual population, that bilinguals are truly blessed and talented to be able to function in two languages (Wong Fillmore, 1993). For over a decade, researchers and practitioners have also discussed the importance of empowerment to validate and build on the experiences of learners in order to connect them to challenging learning opportunities that enable higher level thinking and performance (Cummins, 1989; García, 1992; Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Trueba, 1989; Walsh, 1991).

Objective of This Paper

This paper discusses a three-year training program of staff development specialists to work in bilingual and bicultural education programs or in schools with substantial numbers of LEP students. Staff development is defined as an in service system that ensures that bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) education professionals regularly enhance their academic knowledge and professional performance. It consists of ways to embed professional growth opportunities into the work life of teachers and administrative and supervisory personnel (Calderón & Marsh, 1988; Mercado, 1985). This program sought to train staff development specialists who could function in two languages, who were cognizant of and sensitive to the problems and advantages of LEP students, who developed a strong background in bilingual and bicultural education, and who were committed to quality education and social change. It was expected that the knowledge and skills acquired in this training would add to their professional development and upward mobility to compete for jobs on the local and state levels.

This paper examines the IHE's efforts to institutionalize its training program in relation to eight features of institutionalization. It discusses the staff development training to increase the qualifications of trainees, and the curricula to meet the staff development needs of the six LEAs. The training was offered within a context of staff development partnerships between an IHE and six LEAs to meet the needs of LEP students in an effort to strengthen their respective bilingual programs. The LEAs are located in the six largest cities in a state in Southern New England and serve the largest concentrations of LEPs in the state. The paper focuses on the process of training of staff developers as creative problem solvers in charge of effective change processes. It examines selected theoretical constructs used in the training and how these constructs apply to the reality of the classroom, in language development and in the content areas of the curriculum. Finally, it discusses the outcomes of this program in terms of the issues just mentioned.

Program Institutionalization

Institutionalization is a socioeducational, political, and economic process of legitimacy that systematically integrates the program of bilingual education teacher training with the academic system of the IHE (Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, 1989). The process makes the program a regular part of the IHE's academic offerings. This IHE's graduate teacher training program of bilingual and bicultural education has been in place for over a decade. It offers the master's and doctoral degrees and the post-master sixth-year professional diploma as part of the School of Education regular offerings. As it is the case of many IHEs, this IHE considers the provision of bilingual education services to LEP students a vital function in its training programs, and that it has a role to play in the preparation of personnel who, in some capacity, will be or are meeting the educational and linguistic needs of bilingual students.

The bilingual training program meets the eight indicators of institutionalization proposed by the RMC Research Corporation (1981) and reported by Chu and Levy (1984) and Johnson and Binkley (1987). The indicators of institutionalization are as follows: (1) **Active support of administrators.** The IHE has a Steering Committee for Bilingual Education chaired by the Dean of the School of Education. The Committee meets three times a year to discuss curricular issues and program policies. Members of the Committee are the bilingual faculty, LEAs' Bilingual Program Directors, the SEA's Bilingual Director, graduate students, and support faculty from eleven academic departments within the IHE; (2) **Positive attitudes of non-bilingual education faculty.** Most faculty outside the bilingual program has been supportive for the institutionalization of the program. In addition to teaching courses for the bilingual program, they are also members of its advisory committee and its graduate admission committee; (3) **Faculty support through institutional funds.** The three bilingual faculty positions are entirely funded by institutional funds; (4) **Faculty tenure status.** The bilingual faculty are tenured and promoted or are on tenure track; (5) **Program continuation without federal funds.** The IHE has assumed program costs when federal funding has ceased, especially with respect to faculty positions; (6) **Involvement of several professionals in program operations.** The vitality of the bilingual program is due to the skills and dedication of its bilingual faculty and a cohort of faculty from within the School of Education in the departments of Curriculum and Instruction, where the bilingual program is located, Educational Psychology, and Educational Leadership, and from departments outside of the School, Anthropology, Linguistics, Spanish, Puerto Rican Studies, English, Psychology, and Communication Sciences; (7) **Compatibility with institutional priorities.** The bilingual program is compatible with the IHE's mission--to research, to teach, and to provide services. The presence of the state bilingual education legislation and certification have been important variables in assessing compatibility with IHE's goals since such legislation and certification legitimizes the existence of the curriculum and courses within the School of Education framework; and, (8) **Sufficient high enrollment levels to sustain the program.** The bilingual program has had sufficient numbers of enrollees to justify faculty and other instructional resources. The state bilingual education certification has guaranteed a certain level of demand for bilingual education teachers. Also impor-

tant has been the Title VII funding received to pay for students' tuition, books, stipends and traveling to sites of field experiences.

Staff Development Training

Eight years ago, in an effort to strengthen its three functions of teaching, research, and services, the IHE approached an LEA and offered a staff development partnership. It was chosen because it served the largest LEP population in the state. A tenured bilingual faculty was assigned to conduct the staff development. Four years later, the IHE approached five other LEAs to offer staff development partnerships also. The IHE had just received funding for a Title VII Educational Personnel Training Program to train fifty-five bilingual educators to become staff development specialists for teachers of LEP students. The IHE planned to involve these trainees in the staff development delivery in an effort to link their training to the reality of the classroom via in service training.

The overall objective was to increase the qualifications of professional educational personnel who were preparing to participate in staff development activities in programs of bilingual and bicultural education. The project aimed at providing staff development specialists-to-be with the following substantive training: (1) theory, research and practice of bilingual bicultural education; (2) theoretical foundations of education--psychological, philosophical, social--in a variety of cultural and intercultural settings; (3) theoretical understandings of the nature of bilingualism from the perspectives of psychology, anthropology and linguistics; (4) the relationships of points 1-through-3 to the training of teachers of LEP students by means of staff development training models and practicum to complement the trainees theoretical training.

The curricula designed and implemented for this project consisted of a minimum of 36 graduate credit hours of study. It reflected the theoretical and practical needs in bilingual bicultural education, foundations of education, curriculum development, research methodology, administration and supervision, practicum and areas of expertise.

1. Nine hours in bilingual and bicultural education. This core component provided the trainee with exposure to a range of issues on bilingual and bicultural education, bilingualism, biculturalism, language teaching methodology and staff development. It centered on: legal, state and federal mandates for bilingual bicultural education programs; bilingual bicultural program characteristics and variations; assessment and evaluation; mentoring techniques, coaching and the process of transfer; the use of the native language (L1) as medium of instruction, of ESL and cognitive academic skill development; and, the need for programs which stress the development and maintenance of bilingual bicultural capability.
2. Nine hours in foundations of education, learning and curriculum development. This component provided the trainee with exposure to philosophical and psychological foundations of education in a variety of cultural and intercultural settings. Courses offer the trainee with a basic understanding of the philosophical and psychological processes, and of curriculum and staff development, especially as they relate to the nature of educational change, planning and cross-cultural characteristics of schooling.
3. Six hours of research methodology. This component provided the trainee with exposure to the applications of ethnolinguistic research to bilingual instruction

and first and second language development. Trainees would develop some research skills in planning, locating resources, implementing a research project, interpreting, analyzing and discussing data, reporting both quantitatively and qualitatively for a partially-trained audience in staff development units, and constructing a report for in-service teacher training purposes.
4. Variable hours in a practicum. This component offered the trainee a practical setting for staff development and mentor teaching to complement his/her theoretical training.
5. Variable hours in administration and supervision. Trainees developed expertise to receive the administrative certificate.
6. Additional work was recommended in another area of study such as elementary education, reading, special education.

Upon graduation, these specialists received post-master sixth-year professional diplomas in education with specialization in bilingual and bicultural education from the IHE and the administrative certification from the state.

LEAs Training Needs

The IHE surveyed the LEAs' needs for technical assistance and training. Survey data were compiled from a representative number of bilingual education and ESL teachers from the elementary, middle and high school levels as well as from their administrators. In examining the data, it was found that teachers and administrators gave the highest rankings to in-service workshops/services and classroom demonstrations in the areas of sheltered English, whole language, reading in the L1, and parental involvement.

All administrators identified the transition component as the most in need of technical assistance. The transition component, as it pertains to the six LEAs, is the fourth phase of the English component within the LEA's bilingual program. Its focus is to prepare students with the academic and linguistic skills needed to succeed in the mainstream, to serve as a bridge between the bilingual program and the all-English regular program, and to assist these students to transfer their conceptual knowledge from their L1 to English, their second language (L2) via receptive and productive domains. This component receives students who have achieved level III of ESL and are considered by the LEA to be ready for increased instruction in English.

The Training of Staff Development Specialists

The staff development process-oriented approach proposed by Joyce and Showers (1988), Calderón (1987), and Calderón and Marsh (1988) was used to train staff development specialists in a seminar entitled "Trainers of teachers of limited English proficient students". According to Joyce and Showers, quality staff development needs to provide teachers with five major components of training: (1) the study of the theoretical basis or the rationale of teaching methods; (2) the observation of demonstrations by persons who are relatively expert in the model; (3) practice in simulated and real settings; (4) feedback in protected conditions; and, (5) coaching one another at the school to ensure continuous development and use of a new skill.

The seminar was based on the need to make the bilingual and ESL staff developer-to-be more responsible for change and for creative problem solving

(García 1992; Villegas, 1993). It placed emphasis on the process by which the she/he acquires the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to be effective on how she/he develops professional judgment about what works, with whom, and why. It attempted to promote reflection and collaboration with a focus on problem setting and problem solving (Martínez, 1992; Romero, 1990). Collaboration incorporates formative feedback which is used to modify and improve on ideas and practices in transition. As such, it gives the trainee opportunity to converse with colleagues in order to clarify rather than judge. Sharing and providing feedback empowers the receiver and fosters introspective and creative problem solving (Mercado, 1993).

The seminar focused on the holistic process that begins with information. However, rather than give bilingual/ESL teachers quick-fix solutions and recipes for what to do in the classroom when problems surface, trainees were being helped to understand why a new approach was being proposed and advocated. The focus was initially on theory in order to develop an understanding of the theory that supports effective practices. The theory was followed by the observation and demonstration of practices where the trainees got to see the pedagogical strategies recommended. During the seminar, the trainees observed and wrote ethnographies of workshops presented by others--e.g. specialists, professors, administrators. Also they assisted this trainer to prepare for in service trainings. They provided feedback on ways to strengthen the presentation. They also observed, wrote ethnographies and videotaped the workshop delivery to groups of teachers at LEAs. At the next seminar class meeting, a discussion on what went well, what did not go well took place.

The responsibility to offer staff development gradually shifted from the seminar to the practicum the following semester. Cohorts of 3 to 7 trainees assumed responsibilities to prepare and to conduct in service training. Participants were elementary, middle and high school bilingual and ESL teachers and administrators. The training offerings mirrored regular academic semesters, weekly two-hour meetings for fifteen weeks plus an official LEA in-service day.

Theoretical Developments

The overall objective was to move teachers between the theory and the practice through guided reflection with the premise that good practice informs theory as much as good theory informs practice. Therefore theory was used to generate practice and practice was analyzed to understand theory (Kagan, Dennis, Igou, Moore, & Sparks, 1993; Lieberman & Miller, 1991).

The focus of the staff development plan relied on theoretical developments of the last twelve years on the areas of language acquisition and bilingual cognitive development proposed by Cummins (1981, 1984, 1989) and Krashen (1981, 1985, 1989). Cummins poses that basic cognitive skills are pre-linguistic or metalinguistic because the fundamental capabilities easily flow back and forth between the two different language domains. Basic conceptual skills--e.g. insights in mathematics and science--are not therefore closely tied to a particular language, once they are mastered by the LEP student. He suggests that first and second language academic skills are interdependent. They are manifestations of a **Common Underlying Proficiency**.

Cummins also poses two dimensions that account for the differences between the linguistic and academic demands of the school and those of interper-

sonal communication contexts outside the school. In the **context-embedded/context-reduced dimension**, communicants can or can not actively negotiate for meaning while the language they use is or is not supported by a wide range of contextual clues, such as gestures, realia. In the **cognitively undemanding/cognitively demanding dimension**, demands have or have not been largely automatized and may or may not require active cognitive involvement. This framework served the staff development program as follows: (1) the transition students will be able to function orally in English; and, (2) they will then be able to transfer the skills from context-embedded, concrete situations to more abstract, context-reduced problem-solving.

Christian, Spanos, Crandall, Simich-Dudgeon, and Willets (1990), Crandall, Dale, Rhodes, and Spanos (1987) and Spanos, Rhodes, Dale, and Crandall (1988) have emphasized the way in which academic tasks require problem-solving and conceptual agility in context-reduced situations. The teaching of content areas of the curriculum, as commonly occurs in bilingual and mainstream classrooms, is especially context-reduced whenever math computations or science problems are to be solved as simple, unadorned computations or experiments with no content whatsoever to the numbers or scientific experiments (Secada, 1992). All students must, of course, be able to deal with context-reduced and cognitively-demanding challenges in their later years of school. However, such cognitive skills are usually developed through rich, contextualized experiences of problem solving in the earlier years.

During the practicum, the staff developers-to-be interpreted Cummins' theoretical proposals and prepared visual representations of them. Illustrations of the context-embedded/context-reduced (horizontal) continuum included: high/low context; easiest/hardest; clues/no clues (gestures, concrete referents, visuals, realia, intonation); and, less language dependent/language dependent. Illustrations of the cognitively-undemanding/cognitively-demanding (vertical) continuum included: low/high cognitive demand; easiest/hardest; some/no automaticity; knowledge, comprehension, application/analysis, synthesis, evaluation; pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar/semantic meaning, functional meaning. Examples from the context-embedded to the context-reduced continuum ranged from eating at McDonald's to making a cheesecake to writing an assignment. Examples from the cognitively-undemanding to the cognitively-demanding continuum ranged from a visit to the supermarket to following directions to solving an algebra equation. An ensuing step was to illustrate a sequential bilingual education program placing various academic and linguistic skills in the four quadrants of the two continua.

Krashen (1981, 1985, 1989) has emphasized the importance of **comprehensible input** as an essential component in developing increased cognitive and language skills. That is, a major fraction or portion of the language-mediated input a student is receiving must be comprehensible--understood by the individual--to provide a framework for absorption of new material.

Typically in mainstreamed (mathematics, science, social studies) classes, bilingual students have been confronted with both new concepts, new cognitive challenges, and a "foreign", new, vocabulary of expression. With a new vocabulary added to the conceptual issues, the student has great difficulty in linking the new materials back to his or her store of basic cognitive abilities, even though

he or she may have experienced some of the content in everyday activities with peers.

Krashen also claims that students need to be willing and lower their **affective filter**. The affective filter will be permissive toward the acquisition of new knowledge and skills if students feel some familiarity with the materials they are working on. Students are bound to be more positively inclined and motivated if they are given the opportunity to participate in the collection, the definition of the content along with the specific L1 vocabulary relevant to content areas of the curriculum. The use of cooperative group structuring of activities may also contribute to lowering the resistance or filtering effect, thus adding to the likelihood of positive experience and enhanced learning (Kagan, 1986; McGroarty, 1989).

During the practicum, the staff developers-to-be interpreted Krashen's theoretical proposals and prepared visual representations of the process of second language acquisition via comprehensible input and low affective filter. They interpreted comprehensible input as verbal or non-verbal. Comprehensible input meant i + 1, 2, 3, etc., whereas i = language already known and background knowledge (cognitive, linguistic, cultural in L1 and English) and + 1, 2, 3 = new linguistic, cognitive, cultural material, high context, low/high cognitive involvement, interesting, relevant, not grammar-based, focus on the message. Low affective filter meant: motivated; low anxiety level; not on the defensive; self-confident; not concerned with the possibility of failure; member of the group; focus on the message, on what, not on the form, on how. Both comprehensible input and affective filter trigger language acquisition meaning cognitive, academic and cultural development via verbal or nonverbal performance.

Staff Development Delivery

It was often necessary that in the preparation of staff development, trainees would observe classrooms, talk to teachers and school administrators in order to determine the specific training need to be addressed in the workshop. Frequently, the need was introduced in the context of a problem-solving scenario usually followed by a group dynamics activity that tended to involve participants from the beginning of the workshop. This trainer then became their facilitator who attempted to provide them with a coaching environment from theory, to observation, to practice with coaching. Then each cohort practiced with feedback and was videotaped delivering a workshop to a group of teachers in an LEA. At the following class meeting, each group discussed within the group and later with this trainer what had gone on, what was effective, what was ineffective.

The staff developers-to-be co-presented a number of workshops at LEAs. Workshop titles included: "Helping language minority students after they exit from the bilingual classroom"; "Sheltered English: Classroom applications and implications"; "Second language acquisition via whole language"; and, "Meaningful reading in Spanish". Workshop titles for parents included: "Helping to educate our adolescents"; and, "The power of language and culture in the education of our children".

At the conclusion of each workshop, participants completed objective evaluations. The ratings for the workshops from teachers were exceptionally high; that is, participating teachers believed that the workshops were an especially useful resource. They indicated that: (1) the workshops were clearly organized and presented; (2) the presenters had a command of the subject matter and used varied

approaches in order to meet the training objectives; (3) the objectives and materials were appropriate to address the needs of participating teachers and their students; and, (4) knowledge and skills learned in the training would be applied to specific teaching situations.

The ratings for the workshops from parents of LEP students were also exceptionally high. Like the teachers, parents were thoroughly pleased with the presentation of workshops by the trainees. Parents indicated that: (1) the information received was valuable; (2) the themes discussed were helpful to help their children; and, (3) the presenters were well prepared and made interesting presentations.

The seminar and the practicum were the most fundamental training opportunities for staff development, what trainees would be doing as certified professionals. They offered anonymous open-ended evaluations for both the seminar and the practicum. They believed that: (1) these two core courses were worthy; (2) the experiences were time consuming but worthwhile opportunities to develop their skills as staff development specialists; (3) there was a good sense of groupness and cooperation to present a good workshop; (4) the LEA and the IHE needed to be more involved in the scheduling of staff development delivery; (4) the selection of workshop content areas met their expectations as staff developers; (5) the instructor helped and oriented them very well, was supportive, and gave them a lot of security and stimulation; and, (6) they felt they could give workshops alone in the future.

Conclusion

The benefits seem to be mutual for the IHE and the LEAs. Both have strengthened their bilingual programs. Twenty staff development specialists, program graduates, have been promoted in their districts from bilingual teachers to either resource specialists, curriculum specialists, staff developers, assistant bilingual directors, vice principals, principals, reading specialists, and mentoring coordinators. All of them remain teaching, serving language minority students. Fourteen of them are pursuing a doctorate at this or at other IHEs. For the IHE, it has been very rewarding. The institutionalization of professional development centers at each of the six LEAs shows commitment. Also committed is the Dean of the School of Education who has been spending one day a week at a center for the last five years. The addition of a third bilingual faculty member is also a benefit to add to this effort. The program's accomplishments have also been reflected in the annual report of the vice president and provost ranking the bilingual program as one of the most noteworthy in the School of Education.

This staff development partnership can serve as an example of mutual benefit for the IHE and the LEAs. Staff development specialists can be empowered with the knowledge of pedagogical and linguistic research. It can also be an example of reflective and cooperative professional development in which trainees become more and more responsible of their own professional development. It is one holistic approach to staff development. While one of the outcomes has been the development of competencies for dealing with the transition LEP students, its main focus has been on training staff developers who are tuned in into their in-service training, able to make informed decisions which reflect sound theory,

and able to create solutions to learning problems that go beyond solutions offered in training textbooks.

At the heart of this program are the LEP students. They can be served better through educational partnerships between and among LEAs and IHEs to be empowered with properly implemented schooling.

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